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Annual Report on Legal History from Hungary 2015

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Conferences

In 2015 Hungary became an international meeting point for legal historians. An English-German bilingual conference called *Codificational Achievements and Failures in the 19–20 Centuries* was held in the southern-Hungarian city of Szeged the 29th and 30th of October where lecturers from Belgium, Croatia, France, Poland, and of course Hungary made their interesting presentations about various but similar topics. These lectures focused not only on the codification of civil, criminal, and procedural law, but also on codes on local citizenship, protection of cultural heritage, and mining law. This event simultaneously hosted the 7th Szeged Conference of Legal History which had traditionally been organized by the Department of Hungarian Legal History of the Szeged University and the Szeged Regional Committee of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences (HAS) but this was the first time foreign scholars also participated.

2015 was the centenary of the birth of two prominent Hungarian Romanists: Róbert Brósz (1915–1994), and Elemér Pólay (1915–1988). On this occasion the HAS Subcommittee on Roman Law and History of European Private Law organized a session *Antecessores Iuris Romani* in Budapest on May 29th. The presentations focused on the bibliography of these venerable scholars and highlighted the most important elements of their research topics such as *iniuria*, *superfices* and the defective performance in ancient Rome.

Another commemorative session, organized by the Ministry of Justice and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Hungary to pay tribute to the renowned Hungarian minister of Justice Gábor Vladár (1881–1972), was held on October 16th. Vladár was persecuted by the national socialist regime because of his actions to protect Jews from deportation and to free the Hungarian anti-fascist politicians arrested by the Gestapo. After the Second World War the communist leadership also considered him to be its

enemy due to his role in the Horthy regime and to the fact that he came from a noble family. Besides the introduction of his biography the lectures also presented the status of the Hungarian Ministry of Justice in the interwar period and the relationship between the state and the Evangelical Lutheran Church after 1945.

A conference named *Crisis and Reforms in Criminal Law – Jenő Balogh and Renewal of Hungarian Criminal Law at the turn of the 20th Century* was conducted in Budapest by the Department of Legal History of the Eötvös Loránd University, the Hungarian Jurists' Association, and the Hungarian Academy of Sciences on November 19th.

The presentations focused on two reforms: the introduction of the criminal code for juveniles in 1907 (Jenő Balogh was a specialist in this field), and the opening of work-houses in 1913.

Books

József Ruzsoly, professor emeritus of the legal history department of the Szeged University, published a book titled *The History of Electoral Jurisdiction in Hungary*.¹ The author is a prominent expert on the topic, and this work can be considered a thorough summation of his career. The writing focuses on the period between the Hungarian Reform Era (basically the first part of the 19th century) and the communist takeover in the middle of the 20th century. He also deals with the history of Hungarian voter registration in this book.

Another publication from this year is the *Historical Outline of Military Criminal Law and Justice in Hungary (1867–1944)*² by Lieutenant Ádám Farkas and Roland Kelemen. The book is mainly about the Hungarian military criminal codes of the period (one from 1912 and another from 1930). The authors wrote about the military justice of the ancient and medieval era and they also presented the work of military courts during the first and the second world wars.

*The Examination of the Domestic Law on Aliens in the First Decades of the 20th Century with Special Regards to the Organization of Public Authorities*³ by Tamás Szentgyörgyvári is a topical work which relates to the ongoing European migrant crisis. In the first part of the book the author presents how the defense of the borders evolved between the 16th and 19th centuries with great emphasis on the so-called military frontier regions of the Habsburg Monarchy. The second part deals with the migration issues in Hungary at the turn of the 20th century which led to the creation of the Act V of 1903 on residence of foreigners in Hungary. This legal document is the subject of the third

¹ J. Ruzsoly, *A választási bíráskodás története Magyarországon*, Pólay Elemér Alapítvány, Szeged 2015.

² Á. Farkas, R. Kelemen, *A polgári Magyarország katonai büntetőjogának és igazságszolgáltatásának történeti vázlata 1867–1944*. Széchenyi István Egyetem Batthyány Lajos Szakkollégium, Győr 2015.

³ T. Szentgyörgyvári, *A hazai idegenrendészeti jog vizsgálata a 20. század első évtizedeiben, különös tekintettel a hatósági szervezet bemutatására*, Széchenyi István Egyetem Batthyány Lajos Szakkollégium, Győr 2015.

part of the book but focuses primarily on the authorities charged with policing aliens. The fourth and the fifth parts highlight the problems of laws on aliens in Hungary in the interwar period when the Central Authority of Control over Foreigners was established.